

DOKURA NEWS

OCTOBER 2009

With this issue, the District of Kenora Unincorporated Areas Ratepayers Association (DOKURA) has expanded its mailing list to include more than one individual from each of the organizations we have been able to identify within the Kenora District. Our hope is that the increased circulation will get our message out to more area residents.

Please remember, that if you are receiving this publication, we hope you will make copies available to others in your area. If you would like a number of copies sent to your for distribution, every time we publish a newsletter (two or three annually) please let our secretary know and we'll be happy to send you the required number.

"E" MAIL

Probably the easiest way to contact you when something comes up that dictates our contacting you quickly.

From time to time, we run into situations where we learn of something and need to get the message out to everyone, or certain areas of our Kenora District, but don't have the time to do so via a newsletter. What we are trying to do is compile an "E" Mail address list so we can get the message out, when we need to.

A couple of examples of where we needed to contact people quickly occurred this past summer. The first was to make sure everyone knew of the activities of a small group of individuals attempting to form a new Local Services Board in the area West of Kenora. They had made application to the Province and were going thru the mandatory meeting and public vote process. DOKURA wanted to make sure everyone involved was aware of the process, and what the end result would be, if the application went thru, - more taxes to local residents.

DOKURA volunteers phoned the Secretary of each Roads Board and Road Association in the area potentially effected, but had we had a list of "E" Mail addresses, we could have gotten the job done much faster and not had to make as many "call-backs".

A similar process took place in the Oxdrift area, and has, we understand, now been approved.

In addition to the LSB applications, DOKURA learned of another "Short window of opportunity" for local groups, in early August. This was another round funding grants available to non-profit groups, under the Infrastructure Stimulus program. We received word of the program during the last week of July, and noted that applications had a closing date of August 18th.

Again, not enough time to let everyone know via a newsletter.

So, please take a moment to send our Secretary a note with your "E" Mail address, and that of the other individuals on your Board, so we can build our data base.

You should send your note to dokuraorg@hotmail.com

No, DOKURA will not make the list available to others. The listing, including the postal address listing we have, is for our use only. If we get individuals or groups who approach us wanting a copy so they can contact everyone directly, our answer is "NO". The only way we will allow such individuals or groups to access those on our mailing list, is via an article or advertisement in our next newsletter.

GAS TAX REBATE PROGRAM – AN UP-DATE

DOKURA residents are familiar the Association’s efforts in lobbying both the Federal and Provincial Governments to make sure that the tax payers in the Unincorporated Territories of Ontario received their “FAIR SHARE” of the tax dollars rebated thru the Gas Tax Rebate Program.

We are coming to the end of the five years of that program, and thought everyone might like to see a snap shot of just who received what in our DoKURA – Kenora District. The chart at the end of this article lists the various Roads Boards and Road Associations, within the area, and just how much each actually received.

A quick glance indicates that the Roads Boards received their fair share, but the Road Associations, including those groups MTO lists as “50-50 Specials”, received nothing.

Yes, both the Federal and Provincial officials were well aware of the two types of road administration groups here, well before they started handing out the funding. Unfortunately, in spite of numerous letters to both levels of government, phone calls and meetings with Federal officials, the end result of the first five year program saw that just the Roads Boards receive their “Fair Share”.

The next round of funding, covering the period from 2010 thru 2014, has been confirmed, and the Unincorporated Territories of Ontario, included. At this writing, DoKURA has heard from several Roads Board Secretaries who have asked what they might expect, so they can factor the amount into their budgets. Unfortunately, the information is not yet available.

DoKURA has met with local MP Greg Rickford and raised the subject with him. Hopefully the efforts of his staff will result in the information flowing shortly, and consideration given to extending the grant to include those whose roads are administered by Road Associations.

<u>LAKE OF THE WOODS NORTH AREA</u> REBATE	GAS TAX REBATE	<u>OXDRIFT AREA</u>	GAS TAX
Cygnnet Lake Road Association	NIL	Aubrey East Local Roads Board	11,966
East Long Pine Road Association	\$4,612	Britton Twp. Local Roads Board	20,692
Ena Lake Local Roads Board	\$4,612	Eton Local Roads Board	32,284
Engineer Lake Road Association	NIL	East Cedar Lake Road Association	
NIL			
Gordon Lake Local Roads Board	\$6,232	Ghost Lake Local Roads Board	\$2,805
Ingolf Local Roads Board	\$1,309	Colenso, Redvers East & Wabigoon East	
Laclu Local Roads Board	\$8,227	Statute of Labor Board	NIL
McConnell Lake Local Roads Board	\$623	Mutrie Local Roads Board	
30,913			
Minaki Local Roads Board	\$2,992	McIntosh Local Roads Board	
15,394			
N. E. Bay Subdivision Road Association	NIL	Melgund Local Roads Board	22,499
Pellatt #2 Local Roads Board	14,397	Rowell Local Roads Board	
20,068			
Pickerel Lake Local Roads Board	\$6,232	Rugby Local Roads Board	
10,595			
Redditt Local Roads Board	\$3,989	Snake Bay Road Association	NIL
Sturgeon Road Association	NIL	Southshore Road Association	NIL
Sherwood Lake Roads Board	\$4,924	Southworth Local Roads Board	23,309
Tannis Lake Local Roads Board	\$2,493	Van Horne Local Roads Board	24,244
War Eagle Lake Local Roads Board	\$1,683	Wainright Local Roads Board	26,799
<u>LAKE OF THE WOODS SOUTH AREA</u>		Wabigoon Redvers West Local Roads Board	
22,374			
Burma Road Road Association	NIL	Wabigoon S.E. Local Roads Board	
\$2,805			
Bigstone Bay Local Roads Board	\$1,122	Zealand 3 Local Roads Board	14,459
Blindfold Lake Local Roads Board	\$2,431	Zealand 1 Local Roads Board	
22,561			
Dogtooth Lake Road Association	NIL		
Group Four Road Association	NIL	<u>LAC SEUL AREA</u>	
Gold Pointe Road Association	NIL	Hopperstad Road Association	NIL
Hawk Lake Road Association	NIL	Van Patter Road Association	NIL
Inglis Lake Local Roads Board	\$1,496	Snake Falls Road Association	NIL
Kendall Inlet Local Roads Board	\$3,303	Chicago Point Campers Association	NIL
Kenricia Local Roads Board	\$3,490		

Lake of Two Mountains Road Association	NIL	
McKenzie Portage Local Roads Board	\$4,363	
McCallum Point Local Roads Board	\$2,680	
Northern Peninsula Road Association	NIL	
Paddy Lake Road Association	NIL	
Red Pine Ridge Local Roads Board		\$3,552
Rush Bay Local Roads Board	28,669	
Storm Bay Local Roads Board	12,029	
Spruce Lake Road Association	NIL	
Welcome Channel Road Corporation	NIL	
West Longbow Lake Road Association	NIL	

ANNUAL MEETING

We held our annual meeting and election of Directors, in the Longbow Lake Fire Hall, the Friday evening of August 21st. That was a little later in the summer than in past years, however if the attendance was any indication, the late August date seems to be more preferred than June or July. We had a record number of individuals in attendance, and to those of you who took the time to make the trip, the organizers say "THANK YOU".

The meeting saw the election of Directors and Officers for the coming year, including the addition of two new individuals to the Board. Ian Clark joined the Board as a Director at Large for the Lake of the Woods South area; Barry Baltessen joined as a Director at large for the Lake of the Woods area; and Bill Latham replaced retiring Director, Bob Wall, as the Director at Large for Oxdrift.

The following is a complete listing of the Directors and Officers of DOKURA for the coming year;

President	Bill Blower	Lac Seul
Vice President	Jack McKenzie	Lake of the Woods South
Secretary-Treasurer	Irene Kember	Lake of the Woods South
Director	Bill Latham	Oxdrift
Director	Colin Hodgson	Lake of the Woods South
Director	Gord Dingman	Lac Seul
Director	Ken Pride	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Penny Lucas	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Barry Baltessen	Lake of the Woods North
Director	Ray Leray	Oxdrift
Director	Ian Clark	Lake of the Woods South

Unfortunately, the two speakers we had lined up for the Annual Meeting had to cancel at the last minute, due to medical problems. The topics they were to cover, Infrastructure Grant applications and the formation of a Local services Board, were tackled by the Dokura Board members. Hopefully the information they were able to provide was of benefit to those in attendance.

In other Annual Meeting Business, those present were brought up to date on some of the activities of the Association over the past year. They included;

1 - An application for Associate Membership in the Kenora District Municipal Association. Membership in this organization would give DOKURA yet another opportunity to work with our Municipal neighbors in areas of common interest. That organization meets regularly, with Provincial and Federal politicians and being a member would give us a better opportunity to become involved.

2 - A report followed on the presentation Vice President Jack McKenzie made in Ottawa in August, to Provincial Cabinet Minister Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services. This presentation was a follow up to a similar presentation Dokura made in August 2008, to the same Minister, regarding a number of issues of concern to Unincorporated Area residents – both permanent and seasonal.

3 - An up date on Dokura's being accepted as the member representing the Unincorporated Territories of the Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay Districts on a new group that could best be described as a Political Lobby Group – Common Voice of the North. This is a group made up of the Municipalities of the area, together with a number of business and community bodies, First Nations and others. Director Penny Lucas is our delegate to that body, and Dokura is proud to be involved. Hopefully that group's collective voice on matters of common interest will be heard in eastern Canada, where the voice of individual members would be ignored.

The meeting concluded with approval of the financial statement; a report on the up-coming Home Retro Fit Grant Program and an up-coming meeting with Federal MP, Greg Rickford. Individual articles relating to each topic appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

NORTHERN HOME REPAIR GRANT PROGRAM

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, thru it's Affordable Housing Program, will be making funds available, in the form of forgivable loans, thru the Housing Department of the Kenora District Services Board. There will be \$300,000 available for 2009 – 2010 and \$600,000 available for 2010 – 2011.

The first portion of the program is designed to assist low to moderate income homeowners repair their homes and bring them up to acceptable standards. Individuals who own a home that is their sole and principal residence with a market value, upon completion of repairs, at or below \$124,538, AND whose household annual income is at or below \$65,100, are eligible.

Briefly, in order to earn forgiveness of their loan, individuals must maintain continued ownership and occupancy of their home, for a term of ten years.

And yes, owners of rental units are eligible, with the requirement that rental units must be projects of at least two rental units. Rental unit owners must agree to maintain rent levels at or below CMHC average market rents for twenty years. Forgiveness of their repair funding loan is at the rate of 5% per year, over the twenty year period.

Like any good government program, there's a number of additional rules and regulations applicable to both of the segments. By way of this newsletter, DOKURA wants to make sure those in the Unincorporated Territories of the Kenora District of Ontario, are aware of the forgivable loan programs.

If you have someone in your area who you feel may be eligible for either of these programs, PLEASE, make sure they know about them. The Municipalities of the District will be making sure their populations are aware of the funding, and how to apply, so help us out by passing the message on. It's our TAX DOLLARS that are being used to fund the projects, so lets make sure we get our FAIR SHARE.

For more information, individuals should direct their questions to the Housing Department of the Kenora District Services Board. The individual in charge of that department, based in the Dryden office, is Adrian Deporto. He can be reached at 1-800-461-5766.

NEW RENTAL HOUSING FUNDING AVAILABLE

In addition to the funding available from the Province of Ontario for the repair to single family dwellings and multi unit rental facilities, the Province of Ontario has available, funding for individuals, community groups and corporations, for the construction of new, or major renovations to, rental housing units.

Briefly, the Province has available, partial funding, again in the form of a forgivable loan, for the construction of NEW RENTAL HOUSING units, or the SIGNIFICANT RENOVATION of existing units.

Individuals who may be interested in constructing and operating rental units within the area, who will agree to rent the units they receive a subsidy on, at or below 80% of the normal market rent for such units in the Kenora District, are eligible. They are eligible for funding up to an average of \$120,000 per unit, if they agree to the conditions outlined above. They have to maintain the occupancy and rate for a twenty year term, in order to see their loan written off completely.

As with the Home Renovation programs detailed elsewhere in this newsletter, administration of the funding lies with the Housing Department of the Kenora District Services Board from their Dryden office.

Shortly, the Kenora District Services Board will be asking for expressions of interest in this program.

So, if readers know of individuals who they feel may be interested, PLEASE help us out and MAKE SURE they are aware of who to contact for further details. Again, it's OUR TAX DOLLARS funding this program, so lets make sure we get the message out. Many areas of our District are in need of additional low rental housing units.

FEDERAL MP GREG RICKFORD MEETING

Friday, September 11th saw DOKURA's Vice President meet with Kenora District Federal MP, Greg Rickford at his office in Kenora. The meeting was to familiarize our MP with some of the activities of DOKURA, and to ask for his assistance in several areas.

Naturally the Gas Tax rebate program and the lack of information on the extension of the program, were at the top of the list. Roads Boards need to know just what dollar amounts they will be receiving over the next four years of the program, so they can plan effectively, what work they can afford to complete, in their area.

In addition to concerns of Local Roads Boards, the fact that area Road Associations have been left out of the program entirely, in spite of meetings with senior Infrastructure Canada officials in Ottawa, was brought to Rickford's attention.

The lack of good information from Statistics Canada via it's census, with respect to the Unincorporated Territories, was discussed. Many of the items we at DOKURA are called upon to deal with at various levels of government, are based, in part, on the information provided in the last census. Unfortunately, the information gathering process, and subsequently the published results, are very inadequate when it comes to the Unincorporated Territories.

Hopefully, something can be done in this respect, in time for the next Canadian Census.

For boaters and snowmobile operators on the Lake of the Woods, who may, from time to time, cross the international boundary, into the USA – Minnesota, the problems with Canada Customs accepting the new NEXUS permit, was discussed. At present, individuals apply for a NEXUS permit to Canadian officials, have an in depth interview by US officials, and then receive their NEXUS card. The expectation is that individuals in possession of the card can cross the border, easier.

Well, for boaters on the Lake of the Woods, and those traveling by snowmobile during the winter, all it takes to cross into the US on the Lake of the Woods is a phone call (use your own Cel phone) to US officials.

Unfortunately, returning to Canada is not as easy. Canada Customs will not accept the NEXUS card and a phone call. They INSIST that individuals who wish to cross by snowmobile or boat, pre purchase an annual Canadian permit called a Remote Area Border Crossing Permit, or, make the trip to one of the approved customs phones in the North West Angle area of the lake.

Again, hopefully something can be done in this area to make the crossing easier for all.

And last, but not least, in our meeting with Greg Rickford, an invitation was extended to him to meet with the entire Board of DOKURA at their next scheduled meeting – October 14th in Vermillion Bay. He has met with many of the District's Municipal Councils. The DOKURA Board is the next thing to a Municipal Council, when it comes to the Unincorporated Territories, and look forward to a similar meeting.

DOKURA MEETS WITH PROVINCIAL MPP MADELEINE MEILLEUR MINISTER OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DOKURA Vice President had the opportunity to meet with Minister Meilleur while in Ottawa this past August, while attending the annual meeting of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Jack was there as an official representative of the Kenora District Services Board, and took advantage of his time in Ottawa to sit down with the Minister and several of her senior staff, to discuss several items of importance to Unincorporated Area residents – both permanent and seasonal.

DOKURA had met previously with some senior staff of that Ministry, in Toronto a couple of years ago. At that meeting they raised the question of whether or not seasonal residents were eligible to vote in local elections to select representatives to the Kenora District Services Board.

Yes, seasonal residents are eligible to vote in Municipal Elections in Ontario, as well as Ontario School Board elections. Unfortunately, at the time of the last elections (every four years) in Ontario, the Returning Officer for the Thunder Bay Unincorporated Territories issued a directive declaring that seasonal residents were not eligible to vote.

This does not appear to be correct, however trying to get a written confirmation of what senior civil servants are telling us, has been next to impossible. The last senior officials who promised to send us written confirmation that seasonal residents can vote, was transferred, and our written confirmation lost, somewhere in the endless pile of red tape that involves so many government functions.

So, our meeting with the Minister brought the matter to the table once again. Hopefully this time we will be successful in getting the answer we are looking for, in ample time for next year's November elections.

The lack of a vote at KDSB Meetings attended by one of the alternates for the elected members who represent the four elected KDSB Unincorporated Territory areas, when such members are unable to attend a meeting, was raised. The vast distances representatives must travel to KDSB meetings, usually held in Dryden, means that, from time to time, their alternate attends on their behalf.

The desire of DOKURA is that such individuals be allowed to vote, thus ensuring that the concerns of Unincorporated Area residents are represented at all meetings.

The DSSAB Act of Ontario, allows for the Municipal representatives appointed to DSSAB Boards to have an alternate appear for them and vote, but does not extend the same privilege to representatives from the Unincorporated areas.

Again, we hope the Minister will level the playing field and allow our Alternates the right to vote too.

The next item on the agenda for discussion with the Minister was the question of selecting a replacement representative from an Unincorporated Area, should one of the elected officials be unable to complete their term of office, for what ever reason.

As presently written, regulations on the Municipal side of the field allow for Municipal Councils to select a replacement representative, but do not allow the Unincorporated Territories the option of selecting (public vote) a replacement. The present rules call for the DSSAB – Kenora District Services Board, in our case – to SELECT a replacement. There is no provision for the Unincorporated Territories to make the selection.

Our position, and our request to the Minister, is that the rules be changed so that we have a level playing field. That we be allowed to select who our representatives are!

The question of funding the activities of the Unincorporated Territory representatives was again discussed. This matter has been brought to the attention of other Provincial officials and Cabinet Ministers, but without any

resolve. The suggestion is that the Minister change the rules so that the DSSAB can provide funding to the Unincorporated Territory elected officials, so they can do a proper job in representing their electorate.

The Minister was reminded that the Unincorporated Territories share of the cost of running all of the activities of the Kenora District Services Board, with the Provincial Land Tax Reform, just implemented (remember your last tax bill!), increased from 31% to just over 45%. The largest amount paid by any of the Municipalities on the Kenora District Services Board, the City of Kenora, is just 21%.

She was further reminded of the promise by the Ontario Government that any additional revenue raised by the implementation of the Provincial Land tax Reform program, would not go into general revenue for the province, rather would remain here in Northern Ontario.

Hopefully some of the items discussed with the Minister will bear fruit. Time will tell. We have a tentative meeting set for mid November with her Deputy Minister to follow up on the items raised.

DOKURA NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING

Looking for a way of contacting the Directors of every Roads Board, Road Association, Local Services Board and local community groups in the Kenora District outside municipal boundaries? Consider an advertisement in our next newsletter.

For information, "E" Mail Dokura at dokuraorg@hotmail.com and we'll get back to you.

WHERE ARE WE

Readers of the Dokura Newsletter are familiar with our Association's representation on the Kenora District Services Board and the four zones the Kenora District has been sub-divided into.

It's all fine to put the boundaries down on paper, in words, however much is lost in the translation – trying to picture just where the areas are.

So, following is a rough map of the Kenora District showing the general locations of the nine municipalities and the four Dokura areas – Lac Seul, Oxdrift, Lake of the Woods North and Lake of the Woods South.

We hope this gives readers a better understanding of just where everyone comes from.

ALLOW A

HALF PAGE

FOR

MAP

KDSB REPORT

Dokura President, Bill Bliower, who serves a Vice Chair of the Northern Ontario Service delivers Association (NOSDA), along with Oxdrift Dokura representative, Ray LeRay, will be attending that Association's fall meeting in Thunder Bay, the first week of October.

This organization is made up of representatives from the ten district social services administration boards, across Northern Ontario. It provide an excellent opportunity to compare thoughts and ideas with other Unincorporated Area officials from across North West Ontario. No doubt we'll hear further from Ray and Bill following their return from the meetings.

*HALF PAGE
BACK PAGE
SPACE FOR HOUSING ADD*

DOKURA FUNDING

Readers of this newsletter are no doubt aware that ALL of the activities of DOKURA are carried on by the volunteer efforts of those who serve on it's Board. No one is paid for their services.

From the information contained in this newsletter, one can see the work that is undertaken for the benefit of everyone in the Unincorporated Territories. Unfortunately, even with volunteers donating their time, there are certain expenses related to conducting the activities of the organization.

And yes, DOKURA has been successful in building up a small bank account, thru the generous donations of a few, but the need for funds to cover the costs related with meeting with government officials, as well as producing this newsletter in an effort to keep everyone informed, puts a strain on the funds available.

That's where you, as an individual or community group, comes in. DOKURA has no formal membership fee schedule, rather is open to all in the Unincorporated Territories of Ontario's Kenora District. What they do ask for, however, is a voluntary donation to help with their activities.

We started asking for donations last year, and we are happy to report that some of you have responded. To those who have, we say THANK YOU. To those of you who feel that our activities are worthwhile, and worthy of your support, a donation form follows at the bottom of this page.

Please take a moment to send us your check. It is appreciated.

DONATION TO DOKURA SPECIAL ACTION FUND (for government advocacy and consultation)

_____ \$20 _____ \$30 _____ \$40 _____ \$50 _____ \$ Other

Name _____

Address _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO DOKURA
MAIL TO DOKURA
P.O. BOX 1245 KEEWATIN POST OFFICE
KENORA, ONTARIO
POX 1C0